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Cease-Fire Developments

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SOUTH VIETNAM

The Military Situation

Military activity remains relatively light throughout most of the country, despite sharp fighting in some areas. In the delta, Communist ambushes in An Xuyen and Vinh Long provinces caused substantial casualties among government units. Sporadic fighting continues in Chuong Thien Province where a US official says the Communists are "getting ahead." Some government artillery fire continues to be heard north of Saigon, although little ground action has been reported. The US consul general at Bien Hoa reports that the chief of Binh Duong Province has virtually shut off US access to his province and acctor staffs.

In the highlands, government forces have regained some ground southwes' of Kontum City, but have been unable to move closer to the two Communist-held villages west of the provincial capital. More fighting may be in store since the government has brought in additional forces for a last "big push" to retake the two villages. In the far north, the Communists are maintaining pressure on over-extended government units in both Quang Ngai and Quang Nam provinces. South Vietnamese say that North Vietnamese elements have moved closer to the coast in Quang Tin Province.

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CAMBODIA

The Military Situation

Government troops reopened a section of Route 4 about 15 miles west of Phnom Penh on 19 June. Communist forces reportedly have withdrawn to the north and south of the highway and are still in a position to shell the road. The government plans to begin moving supplies over Route 4 to Phnom Penh within the next few days. Northwest of Phnom Penh, Khmer Communist forces continue to put heavy pressure on government positions along Route 5 some 45 miles from the capital. The Communists still hold a six-mile segment of the highway in that area and now also control an eight-mile section of Route 6 some 40 miles northeast of Phnom Penh. Reinforcements are being sent to help clear the section of Route 6.

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INTERNATIONAL

Soviet Comment on Vietnam

The Soviets are giving North Vietnamese negotiator Le Duc Tho the standard treatment during his stopover in Moscow. Yesterday he met with politburo member Kirilenko and party secretary Katushev to brief them on the results of his recent meetings with Dr. Kissinger in Paris. The Soviets reacted with a pledge to continue helping the Vietnamese build socialism in the North and develop "independence, democracy, peace, and neutrality" in the South.

Since the cease-fire agreements last January, Soviet propagandists have devoted increasingly less attention to developments in Indochina. What limited authoritative comment has been made has consistently emphasized the positive--i.e., US troop withdrawals, the prisoner exchanges, and the fact that North Vietnam is at peace. Moscow has not ignored the continuing cease-fire violations, but has minimized the US role and placed most of the blame on Saigon.

Soviet comment on the developments that led to the latest round of talks between Dr. Kissinger and Tho was sparse, but the results of those talks are being hailed as an important step toward the restoration of genuine peace in Vietnam. In an article on 16 June, Pravda asserted that the new Paris agreement strengthens the 26 January accords and recognizes the reality that there are two administrations, two armies, two zones of control, and three political forces in South Vietnam.

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LAOS

Negotiatoro Hard at Work

Government chief negotiator Pheng Phongsavan and senior Lao Communist envoy Phoumi Vongvichit met on 19 June in their fourth meeting in four days. The negotiators so far have discussed the formation of the new coalition government, the Joint National Political Council, the duration and mandate of the new coalition, and the timing for elections to a new National Assembly. They were scheduled to take up the problem of the neutralization of Vientiane and Luang Prabang at their latest session. There is little information on the results of the meetings, but the two sides appear at least to be isolating the major points of disagreement.

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